

## LAV III Fails to Meet The Army's Own Requirements

Dear Sir:

Cheers to Mr. Stanley C. Crist. He is the first *ARMOR* magazine contributor that I've seen who has had the guts to report the true facts about the LAV III. His discussion of the LAV III's deficiencies and his alternate solution for the Interim Armor Vehicle (IAV) in the May-June 2001 issue hit the nail right on the head. The selected IAV, the LAV III, manufactured by the contractor team of GDLS and GM of Canada, does not meet three prime requirements established by the Army for the IAV program.

The first prime requirement is that GEN Shinseki said in October 1999 that the Army needs a light armored vehicle that will permit rapid deployment by C-130 transports. He's offering to solve a problem that doesn't exist: The Army has had such a capability since 1960, the M113 armored personnel carrier, and the Army has approximately 13,000 of all models, all fully deployable by C-130 transport aircraft. It can do better anything the LAV III can do, except for high road speeds, and with a good band track it may be able to greatly improve on that.

The second prime requirement is that the selected IAV was required to be an off-the-shelf vehicle. The LAV III does not meet this requirement. Extensive engineering is planned by the contractor team, particularly for the mobile gun variant, to obtain the vehicle configurations and capabilities required by the Army. This engineering effort is probably reflected in the fact that the winning contractor's price was twice that of the runner-up's, 4 billion dollars vs. 2 billion dollars, and that their scheduled fielding dates are over one year later than the fielding dates requested by the Army.

The LAV III Mobile Gun variant is a rehash of the Teledyne Continental Motors turret, now owned by GDLS, that lost out in the Armored Gun System (AGS) program. It is highly unlikely that this turret-LAV III combination will ever match the firing performance of the United Defense's winning AGS, the tracked M8.

Another armament feature of the LAV III that appears questionable is the use of the externally mounted .50-cal. machine gun on the squad carrier variant. This type of weapon mount was probably selected because it saves weight and space over a normal turret. However its external mounting, with little or no armor, makes it highly vulnerable to artillery fragments and small arms fire. Reloading and clearing a stoppage under fire would also appear to be quite dangerous for the crew. One would also question whether its elevation capability is adequate for engaging targets in the upper floors of buildings. Its mounting location and limited depression travel will also produce a large dead fire zone around the vehicle's perimeter.

The third prime requirement that the LAV III selection did not meet is C-130 aircraft transport. The LAV III was initially developed for the Canadian Army, which had no requirement for C-130 aircraft transport. After selection of the LAV III as the IAV, a review of the Army's Transportation Agency's web site showed that the LAV III was not capable of transport in C-130 aircraft. Why then was it selected? Is it because that part of that engineering effort associated with that "off-the-shelf vehicle" is also planned to redesign its configuration to meet the C-130 aircraft transport requirement? This seems extremely bizarre and wasteful, that the Army should pay for this effort when one considers the facts that both the M113 and the M8 tracked vehicles proposed by United Defense for the IAV are fully qualified for air transport in all USAF transport aircraft. Both have been tested by the Army to validate it. Also, everyone knows there are a lot of other worthwhile things in the Army wish list that the 2-billion dollar saving the UDLP bid provided could be used for and, on top of this, the IAVs would be fielded much sooner.

In addition to the selected LAV III not meeting detail IAV requirements, the basis for the IAV program was highly flawed from its beginnings. The white paper entitled "Wheels vs. Tracks," written by Mr. Don Loughlin and available at [www.defensedaily.com/reports/wheelsvstracks.htm](http://www.defensedaily.com/reports/wheelsvstracks.htm) presents a clear and detailed explanation of why the IAV program is ill-founded. Mr. Loughlin is a world-recognized contributor to *ARMOR* Magazine and other defense publications. His paper clearly notes the numerous omissions and errors contained in the Army War College report that possibly led to the selection of a wheeled vehicle to meet the IAV requirements.

In the process of guiding the IAV Program to reach the selection of a wheeled vehicle, the Army has disregarded all those hard learned facts about wheeled combat vehicles in their previous combat operations — the mobility and survivability problems of armored cars of WWII and the hard lessons we learned in Vietnam when we tried to use wheeled armored vehicles as convoy support in a guerrilla war environment.

Just think about the soldier who tries to traverse a city street roadblock of rubble and abandoned cars with an LAV III and fails because of its suspension vulnerability and poor traction. He will then spend a long time in the kill zone, trying to back up and turn around to find a new route. A tracked IAV's pivot-steer feature and its rugged track system with superior traction would sure sound good then. Ask the Rangers and Special Forces what they thought about the wheeled armored cars sent to rescue them in Somalia.

In my opinion, the selection of the LAV III as the IAV is a decision that will prove to be not only shortsighted and costly but one that, in the future, will give our soldiers in harm's way a poor way to accomplish both their

peacekeeping and wartime missions and survive.

I would like to hear some comments and opinions on the LAV III from the guys that are really going to use it, not the managers of the IAV program and not the high-level staff officers who merely executed the Army Chief of Staff's desires, most of who will be long gone when the LAV III rubber finally hits the road.

A. WILLIAM CRISWELL  
via email

## Defining Victory and Defeat In Korea and Vietnam

Dear Sir:

The United States of America (with some credit to Britain and our NATO allies) won the war that encompassed Korea and Vietnam. In a recent book review in *ARMOR*, the critic indicated the USA "lost" in Korea. This is so sadly mistaken and wrong-spirited that it must be loudly and repeatedly corrected.

If war is the advancement of political ends by military means (or any other related definition) then the war in Korea was a resounding victory for the United States and allies. The political goal was to reestablish a free South Korea. Our Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy performed heroically to accomplish this. Today, our South Korean ally is one of the world's advanced nations, compared to the international basket case of North Korea. The U.S. and our allies in that war led the advance of freedom and economic prosperity in the world today, compared to the retarded, repressive, and backward China. The political ends of Korea were met and the war was won, even if you consider Korea an isolated war unto itself.

If you consider Vietnam an isolated war unto itself, I would suggest that people look hard at the facts (pushing aside the smoke of the peace movement). Our nation entered into another north/south fray with no political goal in mind. When the political goal was finally established to hand over the battle to an enhanced and militarily strong South Vietnam, the U.S. military had won every battle, seized every objective, defeated the enemy at every turn. The conditions of the hand-over were a defeated and demoralized North Vietnam and a well-armed and prepared South Vietnam. We left on our own terms. That South Vietnam's politicians blew it and their army crumbled does not change the fact that our political system set goals and the military of the United States of America met every goal. The political ends of Vietnam were met and the war was won, even if you consider Vietnam an isolated war unto itself.

Yet I do not consider either of them to be isolated wars. I believe and will teach my children that these long and painful events were major campaigns in the much longer and more wide-reaching Cold War. The Cold

War began before WWII even ended with the Russian and Chinese incursions into previously Japanese territories and holdings. The Cold War included Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, perhaps Panama, and smaller events like the Libyan bombings and support of Israel against Soviet-supplied opponents. The total collapse of the Soviet Union and the inability of China to do anything except saber-rattle are proofs of the victory of freedom and democracy over totalitarianism.

Don't buy into the liberal spew of the "wars we lost." Our military men and women accomplished the missions and won the campaigns in the theaters assigned them, and the result was ultimate victory over the Warsaw Pact and the aimless flopping around of the Chinese. To suggest anything less dishonors those warriors living and dead who fought and won their nation's wars and is dishonest to history. Perhaps yet in our lifetime, a good historian will write coherently about the 20th Century War (like the 30-Year and 100-Year Wars of earlier centuries) that the United States of America and its allies won.

MAJ ROGER T. AESCHLIMAN  
Cdr, 105th Public Affairs Detachment  
Kansas Army National Guard

### Some Background About "Beehive" Tank Rounds

Dear Sir:

The subject of canister rounds for tank main armament discussed in the Nov-Dec 2000 issue and expanded in the "Letters" column in the Mar-Apr 2001 issue deserves further discussion.

First, a bit of history. The requirement that resulted in the 105mm M494 APERS round, known as the Beehive, was generated when the firm developing a flechette 105mm APERS artillery round for the Army approached the Armor Board in the early 1960s, suggesting that there might be a tank gun application for their projectile. The company adapted its artillery projectiles to the 105mm tank gun and demonstrated its performance at Fort Knox. The result against both direct and indirect fire silhouette targets was awesome. This demonstration was the genesis of the 105mm tank gun Beehive round, as well as the requirement for a similar 152mm round. (Life was simpler in those days!)

As noted in the LTC Pride's article, there was concern in Korea when the arrival of the M1A1 tank cost the tankers their main gun APERS capability. The first response to the developing requirements for a 120mm APERS round came from Israel. The IDF had expressed an urgent requirement for such a round during its 1983 Lebanon operations. Responding quickly, Israel Military Industries (IMI) adapted the existing 105mm APERS (Beehive) round for use in the 120mm gun. The adaptation consisted of placing a "sleeve" around the 105mm projec-

tile, adding fins from the 120mm HEAT projectile, and using a standard 120mm shell case. In addition, a new electronic fuze replaced the earlier fuze, which had always been a weak point of the 105mm round. The IDF accepted the round and uses it in the 120mm Merkava tank.

In 1997, IMI offered the production round to the U.S. Army for test. In its subsequent evaluation, as noted in LTC Price's article, Army tankers concluded that the round was "too heavy, awkward to fuze, and difficult to quickly load during engagements." As a consequence, the Korea requirement has remained unfulfilled while awaiting the U.S. Army's canister development and production.

IDF urban terrain experience, much of which is probably similar to what the U.S. Army can expect to face in the future, has resulted in further ammunition requirements. A unique Israeli development, now in production by IMI for the IDF, is the 105mm APAM (Anti-Personnel/Anti-Materiel) round. The APAM is a multipurpose round that can function as an air burst munition against dismounted troops in the open or dug in, or as a unitary HE round against point targets such as bunkers, light armored vehicles, and other materiel targets. As an APERS round, the electronic fuze receives range information from the fire control computer and expels its controlled fragmentation submunitions at optimal height over a long, wide lethal area. As an anti-materiel round, the APAM acts as a rigid HE round, capable of blowing holes in structures and destroying point targets.

Combat-proven, the APAM seems to offer the Interim Brigade Combat Teams' Mobile Protected Gun an excellent solution to the APERS requirement, while providing a unique flexibility to the ammunition stowage challenge. The design appears to have the potential for a similar round for the M1A1 tank, as well.

PHILIP L. BOLTÉ  
BG, USA, Ret.

### The Swiss Experience With Three-Tank Platoons

Dear Sir:

I wish to contribute a few personal thoughts to the article, "The Three Tank Platoon," by MAJ Stringer and MAJ Hall. I am a graduate of ACCC at Ft. Knox and am now a tank instructor at the OCS of the Swiss Armed Forces.

Regarding their comment, "The tank platoon is organized to fight as one maneuver element, not as two separate sections," I would say that this doctrinal definition is correct as long as we are talking about a classic tank battle. But if we are talking about MOUT, a concentration of armor is no longer possible. Either a tank platoon is operating alone, or it is organized with panzer grenadiers (mechanized infantry). If operating

alone, the platoon must be able to cover 360 degrees, and this is only realistic with four tanks, or even five.

If operating with dismounts, the force must be mixed: one panzer grenadier platoon (-) with a section of two tanks. The mech infantry can cover the flanks and rear of the tanks during the approach within urban terrain. But one tank is not enough. With two, the section is capable of providing mutual fire-support and one tank can recover the other if necessary.

The authors note that, "With three tanks, the platoon leader can better control movement and fire of his unit." No doubt, this is a fact. But I think with good TTP standards, it doesn't matter one tank more or less, as long as the platoon leader leads by example. If someone thinks a tank platoon leader should lead his platoon by not directly engaging with his tank during the fight, then we should consider having five tanks in a platoon instead of three.

I agree that the digitization of command and control will be used mainly before the direct fire fight. It will allow operation without visual contact within the platoon. This would be a great advantage during MOUT or within restricted terrain. Again, the future of operations at platoon level will be in sections.

Another questionable area is the availability of tanks. If only one tank of the three-tank platoon is out of order, the platoon cannot be considered as operational.

The Swiss Army XXI will be transforming its combat organization back to a tank company with 14 Leopard IIs and with four tanks per platoon.

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### Soviets Adopted Three-Tank Platoons As a Desperation Measure

Dear Sir:

I must strongly disagree with the article, "The Three Tank Platoon, A Consideration For Army XXI," in the March-April issue of *ARMOR*. The authors' proposal to reduce combat capability in order to reduce training, manpower, and logistic shortcomings is simply a plan for defeat.

Contrary to the authors' claim, there is nothing *revolutionary* about the three-tank platoon. The Soviet Red Army adopted it at the beginning of WWII due to its tremendous shortages of trained leaders, radios, and effective tanks. They likewise fielded many two-company battalions (21 tanks) and, for critical equipment like their JS-series heavy

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tanks, five-tank *companies* assigned to four-company *regiments* (21 tanks).

The authors misstate the doctrinal mission of the tank platoon, which is NOT to act as a single element (i.e., fire **or** maneuver). Per *FM 17-15*, Chapter 1, Section 1: "The tank platoon is the smallest maneuver element within a tank company. Organized to fight as a unified element, the platoon consists of four main battle tanks organized into two sections, with two tanks in each section." Though, admittedly, poorly worded, further reading clearly emphasizes operating by sections in order to fire **and** maneuver. A three-tank platoon lacks this flexibility.

The authors' contention that the wider frontages of digitized operations overtax the platoon leader's ability completely misses the point of digitized command and control, and simplifying platoon collective training by eliminating tasks (and capabilities) is just bad training.

Having fewer tanks per platoon does not solve logistical problems unless you reduce the total numbers of tanks overall (massing tanks by consolidating them into a single brigade, as suggested in the article, defeats the purpose). The suggested improvement in manpower is illusory, since shortages are a percentage of authorized strength, and a three-tank platoon can be at 75 percent strength just as readily as a four-tank platoon.

Historically, the three-tank platoon was an inefficient response to a desperate situation when all else failed. Rather than a new approach, it is a last resort. Let's not go there. Let's train to standard, instead.

CHESTER A. KOJRO  
LTC, AR, USAR (Ret.)

### Three-Tank Platoon Poses Problems of Terrain, Training

Dear Sir:

After reading Major Stringer's and Major Hall's article, I have to disagree with some of their arguments for reducing the size of the tank platoon. First of all, the truth in the argument is that money is the bottom line. If it were not for budget constraints, we would not be discussing this topic at all.

The primary arguments in support of this change are that a second lieutenant can focus better on three tanks rather than four. [Other points are that] reduction of the number of tanks in the company will solve personnel shortages, and that the M1A2 is capable of operating over wider frontages because of its advanced technology.

First, the authors are forgetting corps, division, brigade, and battalion red cycles. With the J-Series MTOE, the platoon could possibly salvage 50 percent of the crew during battalion and brigade red cycles, but forget trying to train during corps and division red

with 16 soldiers, let alone 12. I led two platoons, one in Korea and one at Fort Riley, both with four tanks, and with the ebb and flow of personnel shortages. I had no problem managing or focusing on the 8 to 15 soldiers and four tanks that I had, depending on what time of year it was and what training cycle we were in. So, I don't understand the claim that we need to make a platoon leader's job easier by giving them one less tank and four fewer soldiers to lead. I would submit that by taking away those four soldiers the platoon leader's life just got worse.

In addition to that, I've commanded an M1A2 company at Fort Hood where that installation wrote the book on red cycles and the Good Idea tasking. The M1A2 technology is perishable. Unless the digital system is trained at least weekly and integrated into every single crew, platoon, and company training period, we may as well fight the M1A1.

Second, operating with four fewer soldiers with the same OPTEMPO will not improve our lethality, but will exacerbate the problem with maintaining competent, lethal tank crews. I don't think the authors can guarantee that my prime time training will increase just because we have reduced the tank battalion by another 9 to 12 tanks.

My last counter-argument is with the claim of operation over wider frontages. Okay, yes at NTC, Kuwait, and Iraq, no argument. But what about CMTC, Korea, and the Balkans? I've OC'd six heavy rotations at CMTC. Fighting a platoon across a frontage that stretches from the 15 Tango Bowl down to the Hohenburg DZ does the platoon no good if the one T-80 in the CSOP is facing one-on-one with "A11." In restrictive terrain, you aren't going to get three-and-a-half-kilometer shots with the FLIR. If the platoon leader is unable to mass his THREE tanks rapidly on that T-80 IAW *FM 17-15*, I don't see how a three-tank platoon is more lethal. At least with the four-tank platoon, the platoon leader has a wingman that provides the ability to fire and maneuver.

According to *FM 17-15*, page 1-2, the wingman concept is a doctrinal technique. *FM 17-15* states: "Under battlefield conditions, the wingman concept facilitates control of the platoon when it operates in **sections**." Again, with the loss of a wingman, taking advantage of the technology by operating on extended frontages in restrictive terrain is nullified with the three-tank platoon. Although the IVIS will let me know exactly where my platoon is dispersed in restrictive terrain, it won't be able to magic move my vehicles to mass fires on the enemy if the enemy is protected by a ridgeline. The CITV, I think, is the best improvement that the M1A2 has to offer (I have no experience on the SEP); however, the CITV offensive engagement (B1) on TT VIII is conducted on a smooth course road and is not performed on the "washboard" at the NTC. Therefore, the CITV pays the most dividends in a defensive or counter-recon scenario. Again, there is no

advantage offensively that I can see going to a three-tank platoon.

Finally, we've already begun to eliminate 14 tanks, 14 Bradleys and 2 M1064 mortar carriers from every heavy battalion and the challenges to the task force commanders and their staffs trying to develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures is already producing wild new concepts. The four-tank platoon works, the wingman concept works, and if a platoon leader can't handle four tanks, how will he handle 14 as a captain?

CPT MIKE HENDERSON  
CMTC

### An Infantryman Speaks Out On the Challenges of His Branch

Dear Sir:

My reply concerns one of the letters to the editor in the May-June 2001 *ARMOR* magazine, "No Badges Needed for Esprit: Armor-Cav Is Elite Enough," a letter from CPT Robert Ricks. I offer the following response.

While I certainly agree in principle to some of CPT Ricks' letter to the editor concerning the [proposed] Expert Armor Badge/Combat Armor Badge (EAB/CAB), I take issue with several portions of his thought process.

First, his statement that, "There is no glamour or élan inherent in the world's oldest branch of arms." Maybe in his opinion. However, I did not become an infantryman for the "glamour or élan." I joined it for the tough, realistic, soldier-oriented roles and challenges it offered me as a leader, and the opportunity to tackle one of the toughest, most undesired and unglamorous, yet critical, roles on the battlefield — that of the combat infantryman. We do what others could not accomplish, or would not dare to attempt. CPT Ricks' premise that Cav has the "toughest mission" in the Army is from his perspective. I know a lot of infantrymen who would beg to differ. Our roles are complementary. Each has its "tough" portions.

Second, don't equate the cost of equipping, maintaining, and/or sustaining with the quality of a soldier or unit. While historically this may have been the case, just because you "cost" more does not make you "better" or create or indicate "élan." A discussion on élan with some 75th Rangers or some old infantrymen from the Big Red One, who fought in every war in the last century, might broaden his horizons and understanding of "élan." Again, we each have our role. Infantry forces are better suited on some terrain, against some enemies, and provide certain capabilities. Likewise, mounted forces. The point is combined arms and a "team" effort, not about "who's better or cooler." (Incidentally, élan has two definitions: 1) enthusiastic liveliness and vigor: ZEST; 2) flair: style. Which part of élan is he equating the Cav with? Some would argue the latter, which does not necessarily equate to combat capabilities.)

Third, his reference to "badge-happy" infantrymen. Most honest to goodness infantrymen I know could give a rat's butt about badges. It's about competence AND demonstrated skills. All a badge shows (for the most part) is a demonstrated skill. I've known several infantrymen with every badge the Army can bestow who were not worth the price of their AAFES uniform. Additionally, to imply that badges artificially "create élan" is a tremendous leap, and one that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the Infantry ethos.

I applaud his understanding of the Infantry's "thankless and dirty chore," but it's a "chore" that in a lot of cases makes the difference between being decisive or just providing firepower and an ability to maneuver quickly. Some of us may not have chosen to be Infantry, and likely so in his branch. But most choose to be an infantryman, tanker, or cavalryman, and thankfully so.

We all play for the same team. Be careful the slings and arrows you throw around.

DAVID S. POUND  
LTC, IN  
U.S. Army Infantry Center

### Remembering the Black Beret: Time, Honor, and Distinction

Dear Sir:

In late May of 1978, I was allowed to join the ranks of a young volunteer Army. I remember how excited, but scared I was as I rode the bus to the reception station at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I remember, as I got off the bus, seeing the old two-story wooden barracks, the sounds of drill sergeants sounding off commands, and two distinctive items of headgear, the drill sergeants' hats and the armor headgear, a black beret with the silver ornamentation of the WWI tank. I remember my dreams of seeing myself as a member of one of the elite units of the U.S. Army, the United States Armored Corps. Yes, we were once thought of as elite also. I wanted so much to earn the honor of being able to wear my black beret with my khaki uniform...

In September of that year, I graduated OSUT and was allowed to purchase and wear the black beret, as did my armored brethren. Yes, I had to purchase it then, but I was no less proud of it than the Rangers are of theirs. My beret symbolized and acknowledged that I was part of one of the most elite military corps in all the world's armies, a tanker. Today, in almost all the armor units in the world, you will find them in black berets, as we too once had. I was so proud of that beret and all I had accomplished to earn the right to wear it. No, I did not have to go to an extra course to get it, nor did I have to train to a different standard, but I did have to meet and exceed the standard set before me.

The following year, the U.S. Army decided that we must give up our berets and that only the Rangers could have this coveted head-

gear. We were now separated from our armored brothers in the other armored corps around the world. Now this may not mean a lot to young armor soldiers today, but very few of today's soldiers were in the Army when tankers were allowed to wear this special headgear. [Instead of berets,] we were ordered to wear the old baseball caps. We did not agree, nor like being told we could no longer wear our berets, but because of the true professionalism of armored soldiers, we quietly folded our berets, never to be worn again. We did as all good soldiers do: we followed the orders of our superiors without dispute. I'm not saying that we agreed — at least, I did not — but as a soldier, I obeyed.

Now, 22 years later, on the day that I will leave the service, June 14th, this old first sergeant can once again remove my old black beret and wear it one more time with honor and distinction. I can leave as I had come. With this, I thank the Chief of Staff for his decision.

I would like to commend and salute the professionalism of all the Rangers who are quietly following and obeying the orders of the Chief of Staff. Even though you have a right to be disappointed, your professionalism and dedication to perfection makes you the *ELITE* soldiers that you are. You will wear the tan beret with honor, as you did the black beret, because you are true professionals. As a first sergeant and a soldier for 23 years, I salute you and thank you, the Rangers, for your devotion and commitment to excellence.

To all the others making statements openly disrespecting other soldiers, statements such as, "They just barely meet the standard or just meet the minimum standard," I say you truly dishonor your corps. You are displaying your lack of true professionalism by your whining, complaining, and unprofessional attitude. I further would like to say that if you honestly believe that the black beret is what makes you special, then you have missed the mark about what makes Rangers special. A true professional will understand what I am saying.

To the Rangers who are crying and disrespecting fellow soldiers with your statements about how much more above the standard they are, I give you this challenge: Come to my range here at Fort Hood, climb down inside one of my M1A2 (SEP) tanks with minimal training and shoot 1000 points out of 1000. Yes, we all understand that you are good at what you are trained to do, but we are good at what we are trained to do also. Yes, I understand that you may think you are better than the rest of us lowly MOSs and you may not have a need for us, but you may someday find you will need the pilots and crew chiefs of the helicopters you use, or the medics and doctors that treat your wounds, or the artillery that gives you fire support, or the signal corps that give you your much needed communications that allow you to call for evacuation or fire support, and yes, even the armored forces that

will move in to assist you when your backs are to the wall. Yes, you had better hope that we, the other soldiers, meet and exceed the standards, just as you do.

I have been hearing how the black beret is the uniform item that shows your distinction above others, but you're wrong. You have a distinctive item, which I do not. You wear it on all your uniforms. It's called a tab, a Ranger tab. All Special Forces type units have a distinctive tab which designate them as being special and elite.

In closing, I would like to say thank you for allowing me to wear my black beret one last time and that all soldiers are elite in their own right. I say to all soldiers, wear the black beret with pride and distinction, for it has a long, time-honored history and many great soldiers have worn it.

1SG BOBBY D. JONES  
Company A, 1st Battalion, 67th Armor  
Fort Hood, Texas

### An Observation from Kuwait: All Soldiers Are the Same

Dear Sir:

"All soldiers are not the same." For years I have been told this, and up to now, I believed it. I work as the Master Gunner/Brigade Advisor for the Kuwait Land Forces 35th Armored Brigade, "The Martyrs," which includes the 7th Armor Battalion (K-SA M1A2). The 7th had recently completed crew-level qualification gunnery and I was fortunate to have been invited to attend their post-gunnery award ceremony.

When I arrived, the troops were just starting to form up. As they moved into formation, the statement that "all soldiers are not the same," came in to my mind, so I took the opportunity to observe them in order to see what made them so different from American soldiers.

As I watched, I noticed the Kuwaiti privates laughing and joking with each other, the Kuwaiti sergeants alternately barking orders at the privates and talking amongst themselves about the tank tables they had just finished firing. The officers walking around were loudly boasting about their own shooting prowess, and who had the best platoon. The longer I watched, the more they sounded exactly like American soldiers. Soon, I began to see the faces of my old company members in the formation. I flashed back to my last unit, A Company, 3-69 Armor, and could see all of my old soldiers doing the very same things before our own post-gunnery award ceremonies.

As the ceremony started and the awards were handed out, the reactions of the Kuwaiti soldiers convinced me more and more that this could easily be an American ceremony. The shouts and applause from the formation, the reactions of the individual soldiers when they received an award, and

the emotions of the 1st Company soldiers when they captured the high tank award were the same emotions that my company had displayed when we took the high tank trophy.

I watched as the 2d Company commander accepted the high tank company trophy from the battalion commander and then walked over to his company and presented it to the youngest private. The company as a mass then lifted the private on their shoulders and carried him around the formation as if he were the winning quarterback at the Super Bowl.

I was completely taken aback: the actions of the Kuwait soldiers were definitely not what I had been told to expect. I was most certainly stunned to see the same reactions that I know so well displayed by a foreign army several thousands of miles away from the army that I call my home. So the next time that someone tells you "all soldiers are not the same," particularly when referring to another country's army, that person is only seeing the equipment, and not the people.

SFC BILLY W. SMITH  
U.S. Army

### **Has the Tank Finally Reached The End of a Historical Cycle?**

Dear Sir:

*ARMOR* is one of the best military journals I receive. Your thoughtful articles and excellent graphics are a winning combination.

I am particularly enjoying the intelligent debate between proponents of heavy armor vs. light. The contest may be moot, however, in that the day of the tank in any form may soon be over. We're all aware that a weapon system grows in size and strength (and expense) until it is outmoded by something small, light, cheap, and entirely new. One example: fortifications start out as a wooden palisade on a hilltop and progress to a massive stone castle taking millions of dollars and twenty years to build. Eventually, the castle is rendered useless by the new, small, and relatively inexpensive cannon. Another: warships grow from Henry VIII's *Mary Rose* to fleets of huge steel battleships, the construction of which nearly bankrupt many nations in the 20th century. The battleship is then made obsolete by aircraft.

Does the 70-ton, multi-million dollar Abrams represent the apogee of the historic cycle for tanks? If so, what novelty will bring on its obsolescence? I don't know — I'm an historian, not an inventor — but perhaps the new weapon will be a handheld laser projector carried in every infantryman's haversack, or something similar. Whatever it may be, now would appear to be the time for the armor branch to start thinking small — thinking outside the tank, so to speak.

The business schools like to teach that the railroads went out of business because their

management thought they were in the railroad business when actually they were in the transportation business. Likewise, the armor branch is in the tank-busting business, not the tank business.

HARRY ROACH  
ex-Captain, USAR

### **Changes in Washington Unlikely to Bring Relief**

Dear Sir:

The latest news of DOD cuts (*Washington Post*) indicates that the Bush Administration plans to take a big swipe at the Army's force structure. *ARMOR* readers with good memories may remember how many articles have been published (for years!) in *ARMOR* saying that the Army needed to 'lighten up' or be made irrelevant to future warfare.

The heavy force's heavy hitters were triumphant in keeping the heavy tanks, and in killing the M8 Armored Gun System, among other victories (Yes, I know there's more than one set of fingerprints on that knife.) Several authors said that the Armor force was getting smaller and would put itself out of business.

There is another old saying: "Be careful of what you wish for — you may get it."

Most of the military wished to see a Republican Administration, and the heavy force guys wished to be rid of the M8. The victory party can soon be held in a telephone booth — that's all the space needed.

DON LOUGHLIN  
Lynden, Wash.

### **Historian Seeks Veterans' Accounts of Operation COBRA**

Dear Sir:

I am looking for eyewitnesses of all ranks (but the lower the better) who were in the various stages of *Operation COBRA*, including the weeks before U.S. troops were trying to drive through the Bocage to reach a good start line for *COBRA*.

DR. KEN TOUT  
136 Church End Lane  
Runwell, Wickford  
Essex, SS11 7DP  
England  
Email: KTout45678@aol.com

### **Author Seeks Accounts From Siegfried Line Vets**

Dear Sir:

I am currently writing a book on the Siegfried Line, which is due to be published in March 2002... I would like to contact any-

body who was involved in the fighting for the Siegfried Line.

MR. N. SHORT  
12 Helston Road  
Nailsea,  
Bristol, BS48 2UA  
England  
Email: neil.short@talk21.com

### **Further Reading Suggestions On Armored Train History**

Dear Sir:

The May-Jun 2001 article, "Forging the Red Thunderbolt," about Russian armored trains, was an interesting introduction. If anyone is interested in the subject, I suggest three books published by Schiffer Books:

*Armored Trains of the Soviet Union 1917-1945* by Wilfried Kopenhagen, ISBN: 0887409172

*German Armored Trains of World War II Vol. 1 and Vol. 2* by Wolfgang Sawodny, ISBN: 0887401988 and 0887402887, respectively.

CHESTER A. KOJRO  
LTC, AR, USAR (Ret.)

### **A Reader Wonders: Where Did All the Horses Go?**

Dear Sir:

I came across some figures indicating that the U.S. Army had more than 12 million horses and 4½ million mules at the beginning of World War II (*U.S. Army Handbook 1939-1945* by George Forty, Barnes & Noble Books, 1998). And I have read elsewhere that the Army had its own stud farms and that many Army horses were used by the Coast Guard for coastal security patrols during World War II.

Apart from the 26th Philippine Scouts' use of horses in combat, some provisional local horse recon units, and pack animals, the Army didn't use horses in combat. My question is: What happened to all the horses, stud farms, and saddles/bridles/harnesses?

I've been a member of the Armor Association since 1970, but don't recall any articles on the subject. Might make an interesting historical article.

GORDON J. DOUGLAS JR.  
Fullerton, Calif.

### **1/77th Armor to Hold Reunion**

The 1/77th Armor is having their second annual reunion in Louisville, Ky., July 11-15. For more details, contact Bruce Goldsmith at [bjgold2@juno.com](mailto:bjgold2@juno.com) or phone (636) 282-3302.